

How Col. Amoss Works

Global Private Eye Serves Thrills to His 1000 Clients

(The first in a series)

By Edward T. Follard
Post Reporter

Col. Ulius L. Amoss, editor and director of field operations of what he terms a "private, world-wide intelligence service," broke off an exciting story about intrigue, shots in the dark, and the "escape" of Lavrenti Beria. He wanted to see about his mail.

Presently he was back behind his desk, at his home at Gibson Island, Md., holding up a gray envelope plastered with foreign stamps.

"This," he said, with a mysterious air, "is from a very great Russian expert."

Colonel Amoss (he holds that rank in the Air Force Reserve) has been described by an ecstatic reporter as "the world's leading private eye" and as one of "the greatest spies in history."

Government intelligence men have talked about him in less flattering terms, as Amoss himself wryly admits. A couple of recent published comments from unnamed Federal officials have it that Amoss is a "total loss" and that he was never known to be right.

Also, it is pointed out that Amoss may have caused serious Government concern

when he recently claimed his intelligence organization brought about the escape of Polish Lieut. Franciszek Jarecki and his Russian-made MIG-15 jet plane. By indicating the escape was part of a plot by an intelligence organization, Amoss conceivably made things harder for Denmark, where the MIG-15 was landed. The Danes, facing Russian troops a few score miles away, would appear in the light, less of innocent bystanders than partners in a plot.

Amoss is well aware of his critics and, ordinarily soft-spoken, grows vehement when he talks about them. He calls them "cowards" and "termites" who speak from behind the cloak of anonymity, and says they probably are jealous. He cites what he considers a long record for accurate predictions—"scoops" on Stalin's death and the outbreak of the Korean war, for example. (More of Amoss' reactions to his critics will appear in a later article).

But even his detractors acknowledge Amoss does have one gift. He produces romance, a much-desired and highly rewarded commodity. He seems to be able to satisfy a basic craving, nowhere more pronounced than among American

business tycoons and executives, for melodrama in the international field.

Colonel Amoss gives the inside stuff from behind the Iron Curtain. He runs a lively and, it would seem, fool-proof guide service in this dark realm.

You get interesting reading if you subscribe to the colonel's intelligence service. You get a report from his "seldom-heard-from correspondent in the remote sub-Polar regions" that the Yakutsk Eskimos detest Russian Communists, or from his "very great expert on Russia" that there is bad trouble in Soviet guided missile production.

U. S. Can't Deny It

The Government intelligence agencies can't deny it—they can't say anything, since it is a prime rule of an intelligence service not to broadcast publicly what it knows and what it doesn't, what is correct and what is not.

In a world desperately alarmed by the Soviet menace, overridingly interested in what goes on behind the Iron Curtain and in the Communist underground, and vouchsafed almost no information about it, curiosity provides a seller's market.

And Colonel Amoss provides his subscribers with thrills, spills, stealth and excitement. Physically and sartorially,

Colonel Amoss does not conform to the popular idea of a cloak-and-dagger man. He is 58, a 6-footer weighing 180 pounds, with thinning hair and a rather full face. He goes in for brown business tweeds and bow neckties, and is a cigarette smoker. He talks fluently, although sometimes cryptically; and if you are in an adventurous mood, he can make things seem very exciting indeed.

He states that about 1000 persons, mostly business and professional people, make up his International Service of Information Foundation (ISI). Collectively, they pay in \$25,000 a year for the service. Amoss sends them exciting letters with such items as Beria's "escape" and "the probable Soviet target date for war," and such stirring prose as:

"The heirs and would-be heirs to Red glory are shooting it out in the privacy of the Kremlin's noise-proof rooms."

Some Schemes Cost More

Sometimes Colonel Amoss launches schemes that require more money than is available to him in the ISI treasury. Thus, last September he got \$50,000 from millionaire Clendenin Ryan on what he said he made clear to Ryan was an "outrageous gamble" for the purpose, as he put it, of helping dissident Soviet big-shots escape from behind the Iron Curtain. So far none has been helped to escape, and he acknowledges as much.

Earlier Colonel Amoss got \$7500 from a group of Maryland men, including former Gov. William Preston Lane, for the aforementioned scheme to get a Russian-made jet out of Poland.

Those engaged in undercover work for Uncle Sam say that Colonel Amoss appears to be one of the few intelligence agents in the world who talks openly about the information which he claims to have gathered.

Secrecy, they argue, is the very essence of successful intelligence work. How otherwise, they ask, are you going to protect your apparatus and the lives of your agents? And above all, they point out, you don't want the enemy to know what you know, or think you know, about him.

Hush-Hush Derided

Colonel Amoss, on the other hand, says there is entirely too much hush-hush about government intelligence work. Not only that, he thinks that Uncle Sam ought to support "private enterprise in intelligence."

The way things are going, Colonel Amoss some day will be

even better known than Allen Dulles, America's No. 1 intelligence official. Dulles doesn't talk publicly about his undercover work. Nobody knows what his outfit, the Central Intelligence Agency, is doing except President Eisenhower and a few others at the top.

For all the public knows, Dulles may be entirely ignorant of the fate of Lavrenti Beria, boss of Russia's secret police under Stalin, who was marked for liquidation by Stalin's successor, Premier Georgi Malenkov. Dulles either does not know or isn't saying if he does know whether Beria is dead or alive, inside Russia or outside of it.

Not so Colonel Amoss. He says there is no doubt in his mind about Beria's status. He says that Beria has escaped from Russia—that his agents have told him so.

"Is he alive?" the colonel was asked.

"Well, last week he was alive," was the reply in a recent interview.

Colonel Amoss said he was waiting right now for "instructions" as to whether he should dash over to Europe to pick up some Soviet intelligence that would be turned over to him if Beria gives the word.

Now in New York

Those who subscribe to his ISI service get up-to-the minute word of what goes on in Moscow. For instance, Colonel Amoss informed his clients on September 14, 1953, that Andrei Vishinsky is doomed—marked for a purge. His report suggested that even Vishinsky might not know it, for he said:

"Vishinsky should quickly seek political asylum. A week, a month, six months may be too late."

Vishinsky is in New York, where he is serving as Russia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

One of Colonel Amoss' latest intelligence "scoops," sent out under date of October 28, is a shocker.

"This is a STOP, LOOK and LISTEN letter," he tells subscribers. "Within months, the contents of this letter will be carried by the press wire services of the Nation."

"1959 is the probable Soviet target date for WAR..."

Sometimes Colonel Amoss has hard luck in his timing.

For example, on last August 8 Premier Malenkov announced that "the United States no longer has the monopoly of the hydrogen bomb," and went on to say that Russia had mastered the production of that super weapon.

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apparatus evidently didn't believe it. The colonel sent out an "ISI Telegram" dated from Aachen, Germany, August 11, and signed by Janisi, presumably an agent.

The telegram said:

"Malenkov hydrogen - bomb claim is witless hysterical propaganda.

"America explodes, then talks. Malenkov talks, doesn't explode."

Unhappily for Agent Janisi (and also Colonel Amoss) Premier Malenkov backed up his talk with a blast that shook the chancelleries of the Free World. On August 19 Lewis L. Strauss, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, announced that the Russians had indeed touched off a hydrogen explosion on August 12.

Colonel Amoss says he set up his intelligence network back in 1946. However, he did not break into the newspapers in a big way until his name was linked with the escape of Polish Lieut. Jarecki and with reports of Beria's escape.

Colonel Amoss is president and editor-in-chief of ISI. His organization, he says, engages the services of 12 intelligence experts abroad, two of them among the world's greatest. He says the average pay for these men is less than \$50 a month, although the top men get close to \$300 a month. Feeding reports to the 12 agents, he says, is a volunteer army of 7000 persons.

How is all this financed? The answer, according to Colonel Amoss, is the membership of the ISI Foundation—those 1000 business and professional men who pay in \$25 a year each. From time to time, they get the international low-down from Colonel Amoss in his "general report" and "special letter."

Occasionally, as has been said, he comes up with a scheme that requires big money, as in the case where Clendenin Ryan came through with \$50,000.

Ryan, husky heir to the great fortune of Thomas Fortune Ryan, once was secretary to the late Mayor Fiorella La Guardia of New York. Thereafter he battled with Mayor William O'Dwyer, underworld king Frank Costello and others.

Colonel Amoss told about Ryan's contribution in an ISI letter dated September 28. He had been recounting his trip to Europe, Beria's "escape," and his report to the United States Government about his talks with men purporting to be Beria's representatives.

told ISI subscribers, "had been the exploration of the possibilities for escape of other high-ranking Soviet personalities, based on allegations made by certain agents.

"It would have been improper for the ISI Foundation to finance such an operation from its meager funds. It would have been downright dangerous to use the established overseas ISI network in such an operation for fear that the proposals were fakes planted for the purpose of making contact with and identifying ISI personnel.

"It was clear that it would be necessary hastily to create a temporary organization which, among other things, would 'tail' the members of the far-reaching gang purporting to be in touch with Red Army dissidents. It would cost about \$50,000.

"So I looked for an American, alive to the Soviet Communist danger, who might be willing to back the hazardous enterprise. It was a long-odds gamble—but, if successful, would produce devastating results that might further lessen the danger of war and would certainly circumscribe Soviet existing cold-war operations.

"Mr. Clendenin Ryan was suggested to me as an alert patriot who had been known to support proper efforts to check Communist advance. I saw him; told him that the project was an 'outrageous gamble' but that if it won, the results would be a major contribution to the safety of the Free World. Apparently, Mr. Ryan believed that the chance of such important results justified the long odds, and he sent his check to the ISI Foundation to support the risky enterprise."

The hoped-for "devastating results" of a walk-out of disenchanted Russians have not been realized. But then, as Amoss told Ryan, it was an "outrageous gamble" to start with. He says the \$50,000 still is being used to finance a provisional organization in Europe—one to "tail" those claiming to be in touch with Soviet dissidents.

In his letter of September 28, Colonel Amoss did not tell his \$25-a-year subscribers what he revealed in the November 8 issue of the American Weekly. In a featured article, Amoss disclosed that the \$50,000 he had asked Ryan for was for effecting the escape of Lieut. Gen. Vassily Stalin.



By Harry Goodwin—The Washington Post

Colonel Ulius L. Amoss, mainspring of what he calls a "private world-wide intelligence service," narrates in his office some hair-raising stories of undercover work abroad.

It's a terrific story as Amoss tells it in the newspaper feature magazine, under the title, "I Tried to Kidnap Stalin's Son." ISI subscribers would have enjoyed it—"stocky, grim, nervous" conspirators, a red-haired beauty who was the mistress of one of them, an agent scooting back and forth across the mine fields into Czechoslovakia. Then, at the last minute, the very night of a crucial rendezvous at the border, word came that the Russians were baiting Amoss, intending to assassinate Vassily Stalin, kidnap Amoss, brainwash him and Heaven knows what else.

Anyway, the deal didn't come off.

TOMORROW: Beria and shots in the night.